

BRITISH-POLISH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 1955

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NO. 1055

MAIN

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British-Polish Friendship Society

81 Portland Place, London, W.1

ANNUAL REPORT 1955

Chairman: MRS. D. N. PRITT

Hon. Treasurer: MRS. N. CAPLAN

Hon. Secretary: MR. W. J. ELLERBY

Executive Committee

MRS. A. HERBERT (co-opted April)

MRS. D. PURCELL

MR. W. L. ADAMS

MR. L. CASSINI (co-opted April)

MR. G. CRUICKSHANK

REV. S. EVANS

MR. H. HARWOOD

PROF. H. LEVY

PROF. C. OFFORD

MR. WM. PEARSON

MR. G. SCHAFER

MR. W. SPRADBURY (co-opted April)

MR. P. STUBBINGS

MR. T. TERRY (co-opted April)

MR. A. WATERMAN

MISS R. CARR (resigned July)

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Scottish Organiser: MR. C. BYRNE

Assistant Secretary, Scotland: MRS. M. AITKEN

Accountant and Auditor: MR. A. E. MORTON

* *Ex-officio* members E.C.

FOREWORD

by Mrs. D. N. Pritt

Chairman of the British-Polish Friendship Society

Dear Friends,

I hope that each of you will study this Annual Report carefully, and then put forward your criticisms and suggestions at the Annual General Meeting.

Whilst the Society has extended its work in many areas in the past year, the Executive feels that much more can be achieved, and wider fields can be reached, if our members will bring forward new suggestions and ideas. We attach great importance to each individual member, and we want all of you not to think of yourselves just as people who join the Society but rather as sharing its aims and joining actively in its work.

What are these aims? To build understanding and friendship between the British and Polish peoples. Understanding brings friendship, and friendship brings peace.

We cannot achieve these aims until far more people in Britain learn the exciting facts about what is happening in Poland today—the great new constructions, the increase in trade with other countries, and the splendid part she is playing at U.N.O. Her contributions there to the advocacy of disarmament, to the banning of nuclear weapons, and to aid to under-developed countries will win her thousands of new friends in our country when they are more widely known.

Today, Poland is working for peaceful construction and development at home, and for peaceful co-existence in the world. She is thus working positively for peace, whereas in the past she was a land of constant upheaval and misery.

You can see how important it is to extend our work to wider circles; and we want your help particularly in arranging for more and more speakers to address meetings on Poland, and in increasing the sales of *New Poland*, which tells the story of Poland's fruitful work.

Let me conclude by expressing the real gratitude of the Executive for the splendid support it has received throughout the year from the staff, who are always willing to work for hours after they have finished their duties in the office. We thank the Socials Committee, too. It has again done most valuable work by arranging programmes that have attracted large numbers of people to the Warsaw Club, and thus brought them into touch with the Society's work. The functions at the Club have proved to be one of the best means of recruiting new members.

INTRODUCTION

WE set out in this Annual Report a summary of the work of our Society during 1955. We have tried throughout the year to explain the international situation with particular reference to relations between Britain and Poland; to tell the story of Poland's continuing development; and to interest our people in British-Polish friendship and peace.

In helping our members and friends to understand the significance of events in the international field, we have been fortunate in again being able throughout the year to call upon the services of Mr. Gordon Schaffer, whose grasp of foreign affairs is second to none.

Our efforts to tell the story of Poland have been greatly assisted by the many delegates and visitors to that country in 1955 and earlier, who in their various fields have shown a commendable willingness to work for greater understanding and friendship between the British and Polish people.

We regret that up to the present the International Co-operative Alliance has not lifted the ban so unfairly placed on the Polish Co-operative movement, and we hope that the Co-operative movement in Britain will work to lift the ban at the

next Congress, in Stockholm.

It is also a matter of concern to us that the central committees of the British Labour and Trade Union movements have continued to proscribe our organisation, although their advice has been disregarded by many. We are working actively to strengthen friendship between the British and Polish people regardless of the political colour of the Government of either country, because we believe that it is in the interests of the people in Britain as well as in the interests of the Polish people and indeed of ordinary people everywhere that friendship and peace between all peoples should be maintained and strengthened.

May we hope that all political, religious and other organisations in Britain will recognise that proscription of societies such as ours is indefensible on civil liberty grounds, and a sign not of national freedom but a symptom of the canker of repression and persecution, which is eating into our national life.

Fortunately, in the latter months of 1955 there has been a welcome easing of international tension, which has manifested itself in a greater willingness on the part of trade union branches, etc., to accept our speakers. We hope that this trend will continue during 1956 and enable us to work in a continually widening sphere.

LONDON and GENERAL

The International Situation

Five meetings were held during the year to enable our members and friends to consider, discuss and ask questions about British-Polish friendship in the light of international developments. At four of these meetings Mr. Gordon Schaffer was the speaker, and the Rev. John Bliss spoke at the fifth. These meetings, which were very successful, took place in March, June, September, October and November, at the Warsaw Club.

Poland's National Day (22nd July)

The Society celebrated this occasion by a concert and dramatic presentation in the Princes Theatre on Sunday, 17th July. H.E. The Polish Ambassador was the guest of honour, and said a few words of welcome after being introduced by Mrs. D. N. Pritt. The theatre was full and among those present were Soviet, Chinese, Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian and Roumanian diplomatic guests.

The W.M.A. Singers opened the first half, followed by Alan Loveday (violin) and Leonard Cassini (piano). The British-Polish Friendship Society Folk Dance Group then performed to the accompaniment of two accordionists.

The audience gave a very warm welcome to Mr. Milosz Magin from Poland, a pianist and Chopin Competition prize-winner, whose contribution included several pieces from Chopin and of his own composition.

The second half, *A Story to Remember*, written by Gordon Raffan, produced by Andre van Gyseghem, with Alan Bush as Musical Director, was the story of Poland through the dark years of war and occupation, emerging into the years of work, sacrifice, hope and triumph. The cast of thirty-seven included nine professional actors, with choir, dancers and orchestra in addition. Over fifty stewards helped the Society's staff in the management of the theatre, and all contributed to a very successful evening.

Youth

The holding of the World Youth Festival in Warsaw in August presented opportunities to us to interest youth, and in particular those intending to go to the Festival, in British-Polish friendship. With this objective in mind we made our Club premises available to various committees and sub-committees of the British and London Youth Festival Committees; we held joint socials and dances with

them, showing Polish films, and arranging for speakers on different aspects of Polish life; organising exhibitions; running an elementary class in Polish, with the help of Mrs. Ita Purton, who also helped us to produce a booklet, *To Help You in Poland*.

After the Festival we continued our activity and still remain co-operating closely and actively with the British and London Festival Committees.

Details of our efforts to draw youth into membership of our Society are set out under the section "Membership".

Delegations

Our Society was responsible for sending six delegations to Poland this year. The number of delegates was less than formerly due to the heavy demands which the Youth Festival made on organisations in Poland. Our delegations comprised:

1. May Day. Four delegates.
2. National Day. Three delegates.
3. Relief of Concentration Camps. Two delegates.
4. Women's. Twelve delegates.
5. Dockers. Six delegates.
6. Railway and Building Workers. Six delegates.

In addition, many other persons went to Poland from Britain either as direct representatives of trade unions, Co-operatives, professional and cultural and religious organisations, or by personal invitation.

We anticipate publishing in the New Year a special report of our Women's Delegation, supplemented by contributions from two or three leading women from another women's delegation that went under the auspices of the National Assembly of Women.

Delegates' Activities

In general this year's delegates have done excellent work on behalf of British-Polish friendship since their return. A summary of their activity coupled with that of earlier delegates, some of whom are continuing to send in reports, is set out hereunder.

Delegates' Meetings

<i>No of meetings</i>	<i>House</i>	<i>T.U.</i>	<i>Co-op.</i>	<i>Warsaw Club</i>	<i>Others</i>
186	38	66	37	25	20

Summary: Thirty-three delegates (1955) plus seven from earlier delegations are still sending in reports. They reported 186 meetings, with an attendance of 4,219 at 140 meetings (attendance at the remainder not stated).

Reports of Press interviews with delegates and articles from delegates have appeared in trade union and Co-op. journals, local papers, professional journals and in the national Press.

In addition, members of the E.C. and Trade Union Advisory Committee who have visited Poland in the past have continued to work enthusiastically for the Society. Outstanding among them have been Mrs. Diana Purcell, Mrs. Ann Herbert, Mr. Bert Whittome and Mr. Jack Dash.

Speakers to other Organisations

We have made special efforts during the latter months of 1955 and since to extend the influence of our Society by persuading other organisations to accept our speakers. Well over 1,000 letters have been sent and this work is continuing.

GREATER LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES AREA

							<i>Number</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
Co-op. organisations ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	13	254
T.U. branches ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	170
Other organisations ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9	240

Distribution of literature from Poland

Approximately 6,450 items (twenty-nine publications and ten editions of *Poland*) have been distributed to members, youth, visitors, delegations, Trade Unions, Co-op. organisations, Secular Societies, Socialist Sunday Schools, and at Parish meetings, open-air meetings and fêtes, public meetings, etc.

Week-end School

A very successful school was held for London members at the Beatrice Webb House, Holmbury St. Mary, Surrey, on 4th, 5th and 6th March. Forty persons attended and the two main sessions were devoted to *German Rearmament*, with Mr. Gordon Schaffer as speaker, and *Women and Children in Poland*, introduced by Mrs. Ann Herbert. Polish films were shown, a photographic exhibition was staged, and a paper-cut competition run under the guidance of Mr. Danny Lumley. We issued invitations, which were accepted, to a number of building workers also holding a conference in the building, and to whom we distributed literature. We also sold fifty copies of our German Rearmament pamphlet, *Act Now*, by Gordon Schaffer.

Lobbying Days

On 25th January, in connection with a Parliamentary lobbying against German Rearmament, we sold 2,500 copies of Gordon Schaffer's *Act Now*. In subsequent months our sales amounted in all to 11,000. Again on 25th October, in connection with the Foreign Ministers Conference, the British Peace Committee organised a lobbying day and the Society and its staff gave assistance.

Helsinki—World Peace Assembly

At the A.G.M. in March it was agreed to launch a special fund to send a delegate to Helsinki. About £70 was subsequently collected and two delegates were appointed, the Rev. Stanley Evans for part of the period of the Conference, and the Rev. John Bliss (jointly with the London Peace Committee) for the whole Conference. In the upshot the Rev. Stanley Evans, who was abroad, was unable to reach Helsinki in time. The Rev. J. Bliss attended, however, and later spoke in the Warsaw Club about this Conference in the light of the then existing situation.

Activities at the Warsaw Club

(a) The following committee meetings were held during 1955:

E.C. meetings	11
T.U.A.C.	12
Socials Committee	11
National Day Committee	3
National Day Rehearsals	13
Education Committee	4
Staff meetings	46
Dance Group rehearsals and meetings	46
Youth Choir	46
B.Y.F.C. and L.Y.F.C.	44
Polish Class	17
Other Committee meetings	18

Total	271
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(b) Wednesday Socials with speaker: Forty-three, with a total attendance of 1,677.

These continue to attract an attendance generally ranging between thirty and fifty. Most returning delegates who live in or near London speak at these meetings on a wide range of subjects, of which the following is a sample:

	<i>Attendance</i>
Chopin's Birthday. Mrs. H. Andrews	39
Science in Poland. Mr. H. Lowe	50
Peace Movement—The New Stage. Rev. J. Bliss	40
People I Met in Poland. Mrs. B. Marsh	35
British-Polish Trade. Mr. C. Bolton	45

(c) Saturday Socials and Dances. Total: Forty, with an attendance of 3,939.

In addition to bringing many persons to our premises, these functions enable us to renew many subscriptions and enrol new members.

(d) Co-op. Socials. Total: Three, with an attendance of 218, representing eighty-nine Guilds.

These continue to be popular and enable us to maintain and extend our influence in the Co-operative movement.

(e) Children's Parties. Total: Two, with an attendance of 168 children and fifty adults.

These parties create a wide feeling of good will towards our Society and are well worth all the work involved.

(f) Other events (Monday meetings, T.U. Socials, etc.). Total: Twenty-one events, with an attendance of 867.

(i) Receptions. The following were held for:

Polish Co-operative Delegates. One hundred and twenty applications for tickets received.

Polish Miners' Delegates (to South Wales). Fifty trade unionists present.

Polish oarsmen (Winners at Henley). One hundred young persons present.

All Delegations under our auspices.

Peace Delegation in co-operation with the British Peace Committee.

Foundry Workers' Delegation.

National Day Cast and helpers.

Delegates' Reunion. All delegates and visitors, and representatives of the organisations sending them.

(ii) Trade Union social evenings. Two were held, one for builders and vehicle builders on 19th February, with an attendance of ninety, and one for dockers, on 30th September, with an attendance of only thirty. We propose to continue to hold these events in conjunction with our Trade Union Advisory Committee.

(iii) Special evenings. We are now holding these on Mondays about once a month. Our endeavour is to present something attractive and then to publicise it widely.

The following is a sample of these meetings:

18th April.—Warsaw Ghetto Uprising meeting, with the film *That Others May Live*. There was a packed house, so it was repeated on 19th April because of the demand for tickets, and the film was again shown on 6th June.

19th September.—*Ask About Poland*. A team of nine members of the Women's Delegation answered questions. Eighty-three people were present. There were also a Folk Art Exhibition and special catering arrangements.

31st October.—*Festival Stories*, with a Photographic Exhibition. There is a popular request for similar evenings.

(iv) Mr. Milosz Magin played to a packed audience at the Warsaw Club on 21st July.

Other London Events

(a) Dockside meeting. Addressed by Mr. Wally Jones (delegate), with about 2,000 present. (Indoor public meeting is being organised in February.)

(b) 19th July. Mr. Milosz Magin attended a reception at the home of Mrs. Rose Essex, Hampstead. Mr. Magin played to a small but very interested audience, mainly musical.

BRITISH-POLISH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st DECEMBER, 1955

	Liabilities		Assets	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
<i>Sundry Creditors</i>	<i>Cash in Hand</i>	111 12 5
<i>Surplus Account</i>	<i>Cash at Bank</i>	31 6 1
<i>Balance at 1st January, 1955</i>	..	25 0 7	<i>Sundry Debtors</i>	13 6 0
<i>Add Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year</i>	..	56 15 11		
		81 16 6		
		<u>£156 4 6</u>		<u>£156 4 6</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1955

	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
<i>Administrative Expenses</i>	..	..	<i>Subscriptions and Donations</i>	787 16 7	
<i>Cost of Meetings, Lectures, Film Shows, and other functions</i>	..	2,416 6 7	<i>Income from Meetings, Lectures, Film Shows, Dances and other functions</i>	2,591 18 2	
<i>Cost of Literature</i>	..	1,135 6 6	<i>Sale of Literature</i>	1,006 6 3	
<i>Excess of Income over Expenditure for the Year</i>	..	1,109 15 6	<i>Income from Advertisements</i>	332 3 6	
		56 15 11		<u>£4,718 4 6</u>	
		<u>£4,718 4 6</u>			

I have audited the Balance Sheet above set forth, dated 31st December, 1955, and have obtained all the information I have required. In my opinion, such Balance Sheet is properly drawn up so as to exhibit a true and correct view of the affairs of the British-Polish Friendship Society.

8 Great Chapel Street,
Oxford Street, London, W.1.
Dated this 1st day of February, 1956

A. E. MORTON,
Accountant and Auditor

(c) A.G.M., Saturday, 26th March. There were seventy-nine present, including representatives from the Scottish Area N.U.M., South Wales Area N.U.M., Watermen and Lightermen's Union, A.E.U., B.P.C., National Woodcraft Folk, and various Co-op. Guilds and T.U. Branches, etc.

(d) Christmas Dance was held in the Warsaw Club, 17th December, with 150 present.

(e) New Year's Eve Dance on 31st December, also in the Club, when 140 were present. H.E. The Polish Ambassador, introduced by Mrs. D. N. Pritt, spoke briefly about friendship and with those present drank a toast to British-Polish friendship.

SCOTLAND

From January to early April, 1955, film shows and talks were given to the following organisations in Scotland:

One Co-op. Men's Guild.

Two Co-op. Women's Guilds.

Two Y.C.L. Branches.

Polish films were incorporated at a children's party and a public show for the B.C.F.A.

University Socialist Club.

Week-end School at Bridge of Allan.

G.P.O. Engineers.

Public show in Greenock Town Hall Saloon.

West of Scotland Ski-ing Club.

The Last Stage was shown at Edinburgh and to the P.O.E.U. in Glasgow.

Shettleston and Milnagavie Shop Stewards' Committee.

N.U.V.B., Falkirk.

Govan Housing Association.

The number of people who saw Polish films during this period was 740, and eighty-seven copies of *New Poland*, fourteen copies of the *1954 Report*, eight copies of the Co-op. booklet, and twenty copies of *Act Now* were sold.

Activity during the summer months of May, June and July was mainly confined to preparing the ground for our winter programme, making personal contacts, procuring lists of secretaries, and circularising a large number of organisations.

The two women delegates to Poland this year, Mrs. Nan Wallace and Mrs. Jean Liddell, began reporting back almost immediately on their return, particularly in the Co-op. movement. As a result of their talks many Guilds have booked film shows, and it would be true to say that their activities have been of great value to the Society in Scotland.

Since August, the work in the Scottish Office has been carried out jointly by Mrs. Aitken and Mr. Byrne. In discussions as to how we could broaden out the work of the Society in Scotland, we decided that it would be necessary to move out into rural areas, while at the same time maintaining contacts in Glasgow. The results have been beyond our expectations. There is a genuine desire to know more about life in present-day Poland, and no difficulty in selling the magazine *New Poland*. Our sales have now reached 300 a month. Donations are given generously, and we receive letters of thanks and good wishes. Undoubtedly, our films have done much to break down the ignorance and prejudice that were so prevalent a short time ago.

All former delegates to Poland have been circularised with a view to membership and further reporting back, but so far the results have been nil.

Mr. David McLean, this year's delegate to Poland from the A.S.L.E.F., has joined the Society and is co-operating with us in organising a public meeting on 12th February.

Circulars have been sent out to about 100 Trade Union Branch secretaries, and we are hopeful of a good response within the next few weeks.

During the last four months of 1955 the following work has been carried out: Four thousand, six hundred and eighty-four people have seen Polish films and 775 copies of *New Poland* have been sold. The total number of organisations covered is seventy-three.

The following details of activity in December illustrate the work now being carried out in Scotland:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>New Poland sales</i>
Glasgow S. Co-op. Camera Club	50	—
Glasgow Secular Society	35	21
Sunnyside Veterans	80	34
Bellshill Miners' Welfare	120	—
Cambuslang Rangers Pavilion	85	13
Cranhill Co-op. Women's Guild	23	10
Falkirk C.P.	30	14
St. Rollox Co-op. Guild	45	15
Ecclefechan Co-op. Guild	35	10
Haddington Co-op. Guild	30	14
Glasgow Pre-History Group	35	20
Knightswood Socialist Sunday School	80	17
Hamilton O.A.P.	130	—
Cloberhill Co-op. Guild	14	7
Auchenairn O.A.P.	100	25
Uddingston Co-op. Guild	50	13
Toryglen Tenants' Association children's party ..	950	—
Glasgow Youth Festival Committee	250	not available
Whitletts Co-op. Guild	45	21
Larbert Co-op. Guild	120	30
Glasgow Arts Centre	50	—
Children's party, Govanhill	45	—
Children's party, Central Halls	35	—
Totals	2,437	264

During the summer months of 1956 we intend to carry out intensive preparatory work for next winter's activities in Scotland, when we will develop and broaden out still more.

PROVINCES

In the past twelve months the bulk of our work has taken place in the northern and midland areas. In both districts there has been an advance in the number and type of events. The first steps of progress have also been made in Southern England, where development is hampered only by the lack of time available for organisational purposes.

Liverpool events have included a number of film shows at the Merseyside Unity Theatre and a very successful coach outing to Ainsdale Beach, near Southport. Seventy members and friends, including no less than forty members of Co-op. Guilds, had a thoroughly enjoyable day. The evening rounded off the entertainment with a show of Polish films, refreshments and dancing for over 100 people.

Another very pleasant Liverpool event took place when Mr. Milosz Magin, the Polish guest pianist, attended a reception in his honour given by Mr. Gordon Green, the well-known pianist. Thirty-five people were present, including some of the most eminent names in Liverpool's cultural life. Mr. Magin played Chopin and his own compositions to the guests. Recent events in the Merseyside area have given us friends who have shown that they will do a great deal for the

Society. Liverpool Progressive Bookshop continues to sell our magazine *New Poland*, and has shown a slight increase in regular sales. This sale is, of course, over and above that of our members who receive the magazine from us direct.

Work in Manchester has developed this year through the events held for the youth movement. There have been three such events, as well as a film show for the "18 Plus" Club, and a talk to Manchester University Socialist Society, at which four members were made.

In no sphere of our provincial work have we seen more encouraging results than in our work in co-operation with young people for the 1955 World Youth Festival, held in Warsaw. Hundreds of young people have assisted or attended joint Society-Youth Festival meetings in Nottingham, Wigan, Liverpool, Bradford, and the Potteries, as well as in Manchester. As a result, many joined our Society before and after this important event took place, and so our work has been extended. For example, our first successful meeting since 1952 in Leeds was organised by a young visitor to the Festival.

Developments in the West Riding of Yorkshire show promise. Much remains to be done to consolidate the Society there, but the Wortley Hall School held in March was most effective. Thirty-five students heard Mr. Gordon Schaffer lecture on *The Threat of German Rearmament*, and Mr. Arnold Hardy of the Executive of the A.U.F.W. spoke on *New Poland and What it Means to Us*.

We must not ignore developments in Nottingham, where there have been two events, including a showing in Netherfield of the film *The Last Stage* to over 100 people, and a joint meeting with the Youth Festival Committee. In the Potteries there have been two meetings for young people, and members have been made there for the first time.

There have been several new departures in our work. Lectures have been given to Secular Societies in Leicester, Birmingham and Bradford, and very successful talks have also been given to the Wakefield Fabian Society and at St. Stephen's Parish Church meeting in Rotherham; the latter was presented with a film.

A visit to the Trades Union Congress at Southport this year produced the pleasing result of fifty-one copies of *New Poland* being sold on the floor of the Conference. As a result of this we were afterwards asked for twenty copies for the Welsh Miners' Executive, and 200 copies for the Welsh Miners' Lodges. This was the issue containing the article by the Welsh Vice-President, Mr. D. D. Evans, on the visit of the Polish Miners to South Wales earlier in the year. We have since supplied twenty copies to the Scottish Miners' Executive.

At the Labour Party Conference, nineteen copies of *New Poland* were sold in spite of considerable difficulties. One obstacle was the great number of literature-sellers from very many organisations who were in attendance.

Perhaps the most pleasing developments have taken place in the Isle of Sheppey, near Sheerness. It was from here that Mrs. Langton, a local housewife, wrote a letter to the women of Warsaw, expressing the wish of women to live in friendship and peace with women in Poland. This was signed by 210 in the tiny village of Eastchurch and taken to Warsaw by her daughter, who went to the Youth Festival. A reply has since been received from Poland, and a meeting has been held in Eastchurch that has made us five new members.

Looking ahead to 1956, we have plans for more lectures to outside organisations, and provincial branches of the International Friendship League have been approached. Below is given a list of the areas outside London and Scotland that have been visited for the purpose of developing the Society and a list of events and other activities in the provinces for 1956.

Towns which were visited in the course of provincial organisation:

Lancashire: *Liverpool*, Ormskirk, *Wigan*, Southport, Ainsdale, *Manchester*, Burnley, *Nelson*, *Colne*, *Rochdale*.

Yorkshire: *Rotherham*, *Barnsley*, *Leeds*, *Sheffield* (Darnall, Handsworth, Totley), *Bradford*, *Halifax*, *Wakefield*, *Dewsbury*, *Liversedge*, *Huddersfield*, *Wortley*.

Midlands: *Birmingham, West Bromwich, Smethwick, Nottingham, Netherfield, Stoke-on-Trent, Hanley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Wolstanton, Leicester.*

Elsewhere: Wallasey (Cheshire), *Eastchurch* and Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey), Margate.

Those places in italics have had meetings of the Society or have had meetings of other organisations at which a B.P.F.S. speaker has spoken.

In all, thirty-seven different places were visited, many of them on several occasions.

Events and other Activity

	Number	Attendance
Friendship Society meetings	8	380
Joint Youth Events	9	207
Joint Unity Theatre, Liverpool	3	110
Secular Society Lectures	3	158
Fabian Society Lecture	1	58
Youth Club Lectures and Film Shows	5	165
Week-end School (Wortley)	1	40*
Church (Parish meetings)	2	70
House meetings of <i>all</i> types	50	150
Reception (Liverpool)—Mr. Magin	1	35
Outing by coach (mainly for Co-op. Guilds)	1	70
T.U.C. visit and sales of <i>New Poland</i>	1	20†
Labour Party Conference as for T.U.C.	1	3†
Co-op. Guild lectures	2	35
Others	2	55
Totals	90	1,556

* Including helpers

† Persons contacted

NEW POLAND

The year under review was one of steady progress, but unfortunately members did not make the most of the new situation, created by the easing of international tension, to increase the sales of *New Poland*.

Neither was the new interest in Poland which was aroused among the youth by the Youth Festival taken advantage of to the fullest extent, although it was among the youth that the slight increase in sales, recorded during the year, did occur.

That *New Poland* can be sold easily if an effort is made is clearly shown by the following examples. Mr. R. Lain regularly sells fifty-five copies per month in the small Norfolk village of Wymondham, and the Ponfeigh Branch of the Scottish N.U.M. has a regular order for 140 copies. Numerous other members sell three, six or a dozen copies, mostly in their trade union branches.

In common with most things, production costs increased during the year and economies were made, without any noticeable difference in the appearance of the journal. However, the further increases in costs expected next year must have an adverse effect on the size and appearance of *New Poland* unless we can counterbalance them by increased sales.

During 1955 our main emphasis was on youth. In this way we were able to arouse considerable interest in the Youth Festival, which, in co-operation with other activities of the Society, did much to inform the delegates to the Youth Festival of Poland's devastation and amazing recovery. This enabled many delegates to place events and conditions in their true perspective and thus avoided many false ideas that could easily have arisen.

The Youth Festival photographic competition and the request for delegates'

written impressions proved to be most successful. More than seventy photographs were submitted, from which nine were chosen as prizewinners. These were published in the November issue; this issue also contained some of the essays written by the delegates.

Not only did more British people visit Poland during the year than in any previous year, but more Polish people came here. This enabled us to widen our number of contributors and to do on-the-spot interviews with some of the visiting Poles. Notable among these were the Co-op. women, and the victorious oarsmen who did much to enhance Poland's reputation at Henley.

The Chopin Competition also helped to broaden our field, and all the British competitors were most co-operative in supplying photographs and information about themselves, which formed the basis for a feature in the March issue.

Again our main political task has been to warn of the dangers of German rearmament. As in previous years, we have been well to the front in campaigning on this important issue, especially in relation to the Polish-German frontiers.

The Editorial Board continues to meet each month, when it plans the forthcoming issue and critically analyses the latest issue. The Board welcomes suggestions and ideas, and appeals to members to let it know what they would like to see in the journal.

During the early part of the year, during a prolonged illness of the Editor, members of the Editorial Board took over the complete responsibility for publication, devoting many hours of their free time each week to the task.

Plans have been made to extend the appeal of *New Poland* into fields so far untouched by us. To this end, work was commenced in December on the Film Supplement, the first issue of which appeared in the January, 1956, issue, published in December. It is planned to bring out the Supplement at regular quarterly intervals.

We would also like to include other regular features with a popular appeal, and ask members to let us know which subjects they would like featured in this way.

Finally, the Executive Committee on behalf of the Editorial Board thanks those who have helped with sales, criticism and suggestions, and trusts that this co-operation will be extended in the future.

OTHER ACTIVITY

(a) Folk Dance Group. We have been trying by providing professional tuition under Miss Jane Winearls to build the Group. This is proving uphill work, as we have not yet found a means of recruiting and retaining new members. The matter is under serious consideration as the year closes.

(b) Trade Union Advisory Committee. Here again attendance has not been very good, but those who have attended have been of great assistance to the Society under the reliable direction of Mr. W. Huth, the chairman.

(c) Socials Committee. Its meetings are well attended and its members all render great assistance in running social events. Mr. Percy Stubbings, chairman, and also member of the N.E.C., continues to give that constant and continuous service at our social functions that makes him indispensable.

Membership

Following the return of youth from Warsaw, we launched a special membership campaign in September. Its success can be seen from the following comparable figures for six months in 1954 and 1955:

Month	1954			1955		
	New	Renewal	Total	New	Renewal	Total
July	36	9	45	32	19	51
August	12	25	37	13	28	41
September	55	38	93	137	66	203
October	41	60	101	93	58	151
November	29	61	90	45	74	119
December	24	55	79	50	75	125
Totals ..	197	248	445	370	320	690

We are concerned about the extent to which we are able to renew members. Only about half of the new members renew their membership. We are taking special steps to try to improve considerably on this.

Office Staff

The office staff have worked well, with sustained enthusiasm, and often for long hours in their spare time. Mr. Ernest Hanwell, Editor of *New Poland*, whose ill-health during the year has drawn sympathy from all, has sought to produce new ideas for the journal and, with the invaluable assistance of the Editorial Board, to maintain a higher standard of journalism in *New Poland*. During Mr. Hanwell's sick absence, the Society has been indebted to Mr. Wilf Evans for his work on the journal.

Mr. Roy Sear has shown commendable initiative and enthusiasm in provincial organisation and despite the difficulties involved has increased the influence of the Society geographically and in relation to other organisations. In Scotland, Mrs. Mary Aitken and Mr. Charles Byrne are enthusiastically working together and attaining results far outstripping anything in the past.

A staff meeting to learn from the past and to discuss future activity, short term and long term, is held in the London office every Monday morning and this is of great value in providing ideas and in maintaining the efficiency of the organisation. An excellent spirit of friendship and co-operation exists between the Society's staff and the staff of the Cultural Institute and Films of Poland, also in the building.

The new barman and general help, Mr. Costos Tyrteos, is a young Cypriot who is settling down well and showing a willingness to learn.

Voluntary Helpers

Much help has been available intermittently throughout the year from a small group of enthusiasts, and we are very grateful for their friendly and invaluable service to the Society.

National Executive Committee

The N.E.C. has met monthly except during August. Mrs. A. Herbert and Messrs. Cassini, Terry and Spradbery were co-opted in April, and Miss Carr resigned for domestic reasons.

In Memoriam

On 10th July, Mr. Cyril Newton, known to all at the Warsaw Club, died suddenly. His death meant the loss of a friend to many members, and great difficulty was experienced in the months following his death. He left an infant daughter now four years of age. The Executive Committee decided to launch a fund in aid of the long-term welfare of this child. Over £150 has been collected, and the final event in aid of the Fund will be a special Dance on 10th January.

Into 1956

We believe that we are now using very fully the facilities of our premises and that we must, while maintaining this position, extend our activities outwards by

interesting an increasing number of organisations to accept our speakers, etc. We have already begun to make progress in this direction as this Report witnesses, but the potentialities are very great and leave us with ample scope to widen and strengthen our influence.

In the Provinces and in Scotland this policy will be followed as well as in the London area, and we hope that the end of 1956 will see us able to report substantial progress in our work on behalf of British-Polish friendship.

On behalf of the Executive Committee

Marie Pritt (*Chairman*)

W. J. Ellerby (*Hon. Secretary*)

Members are reminded that the Editor and Editorial Board of New Poland are always anxious to receive articles and reports suitable for publication in the journal.

While they cannot promise to publish every article received all will be carefully considered. Articles giving first-hand impressions of Poland, with the author's own photographs, are particularly welcomed.

Points of view about Poland and the work of the Society are always needed for the Readers' Letter column, which unfortunately does not receive sufficient material for it to become a regular feature.

Letters and articles should be addressed to the Editor, New Poland, 81 Portland Place, London, W.1.

